

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A collapsible shaft assembly comprising:

an inner shaft having a fitting portion;
an outer hollow shaft having a fitting portion fitted on said fitting portion of said inner shaft such that said inner shaft and said outer shaft are telescopically movable in an axial direction and incapable of rotating relative to each other;

a plurality of concave grooves formed in said fitting portion of said inner shaft at locations which are axially spaced from each other and from a front side end of said outer shaft;

filling holes[[],] formed in said fitting portion of said outer shaft, ~~through which said concave grooves are filled with a resin, in correspondence with said concave grooves;~~

a plurality of axially spaced resinous slide portions ~~thus being formed on~~ between said fitting

portions of said inner and outer shafts and formed of
resin material injected into said concave grooves through
the corresponding filling holes; and

a one-piece, substantially annular low frictional member fixedly attached to an inner peripheral surface of [[a]] said front side end of said fitting portion of said outer shaft, and with radial clearance to an outer peripheral surface of said inner shaft.

2. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 1, wherein said low frictional member is constructed of a ring made of a synthetic resin.

3. (Currently Amended) A collapsible shaft assembly comprising:

an inner shaft having a fitting portion;
an outer shaft having a fitting portion in which said fitting portion of said inner shaft is received, the fitting portions being connected to each other non-rotatably and for relative telescoping movement to collapse the shaft assembly in response to an impact force;

said inner shaft having a reduced diameter portion extending from said fitting portion thereof in a direction

of collapse of said outer shaft relative to said inner shaft, said outer shaft having an end portion extending beyond said fitting portion of said inner shaft so as to receive said reduced diameter portion of said inner shaft;

[[and]]

a plurality of concave grooves formed in said fitting portion of said inner shaft at locations which are axially spaced from each other and from said end portion of said outer shaft;

filling holes formed in said fitting portion of said outer shaft in correspondence with said concave grooves;

a plurality of axially spaced resinous slide portions between said fitting portions of said inner and outer shafts and formed of resin material injected into said concave grooves through the corresponding filling holes; and

a low frictional member attached to said end portion of said outer shaft for movement therewith relative to said inner shaft during collapse of the shaft assembly, and through which said end portion of said outer shaft and said reduced diameter portion of said inner shaft can slide relative to each other during the collapse of the shaft assembly, said low frictional member being disposed with a

radial clearance to an outer peripheral surface of said reduced diameter portion of said inner shaft.

4. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 3, wherein said low frictional member is axially fixed to said end portion of said outer shaft.

5. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 4, wherein said low frictional member is a resin member.

6. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 5, wherein said end portion of said outer shaft has an axial end opening and a recess formed in an inner peripheral surface adjacent to said axial end opening, and wherein said resin member is axially fixed in said recess.

7. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 6, wherein said recess and said resin member are substantially annular.

8. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 4, wherein said end portion of said outer

shaft has an axial end opening and a recess formed in an inner peripheral surface adjacent to said axial end opening, and wherein said low frictional member is axially fixed in said recess.

9. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 3, wherein said fitting portions are connected to each other by a resin connecting portion.

10. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 9, wherein said resin connecting portion is formed in a groove in said fitting portion of said inner shaft and an adjacent hole of said fitting portion of said outer shaft.

11. (Previously presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 10, wherein said low frictional member is axially fixed to said end portion of said outer shaft.

12. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 11, wherein said low frictional member is a resin member.

13. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 12, wherein said end portion of said outer shaft has an axial end opening and a recess formed in an inner peripheral surface adjacent to said axial end opening, and wherein said resin member is axially fixed in said recess.

14. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 13, wherein said recess and said resin member are substantially annular.

15. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 9, wherein said end portion of said outer shaft has an axial end opening and a recess formed in an inner peripheral surface adjacent to said axial end opening, and wherein said low frictional member is axially fixed in said recess.

16. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 15, wherein said low frictional member is a resin member.

17. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 16, wherein said recess and said resin member are substantially annular.

18. (Currently Amended) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 1, wherein said front side end ~~of said fitting portion of~~ said outer shaft has an axial end opening and a substantially annular recess formed in said inner peripheral surface adjacent to said axial end opening, and wherein said low frictional member is axially fixed in said recess.

19. (Currently Amended) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 1, wherein said low frictional member is a pre-formed member which is inserted into said front side end ~~of said fitting portion of~~ said outer shaft.

20. (Previously Presented) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 3, wherein said low frictional member is a pre-formed member which is inserted into said end portion of said outer shaft.

21. (New) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of concave grooves include axially spaced, partial-circumferential groove segments, and said fitting portion of said outer shaft further includes resin discharge holes located in correspondence with said partial-circumferential groove segments.

22. (New) A collapsible shaft assembly according to claim 3, wherein said plurality of concave grooves include axially spaced, partial-circumferential groove segments, and said fitting portion of said outer shaft further includes resin discharge holes located in correspondence with said partial-circumferential groove segments.